UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1991/SR.37
25 June 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Thirty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 21 June 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

CONTENTS

Other matters (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

OTHER MATTERS (continued) (DP/1991/L.10)

1. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan), introducing draft decision DP/1991/L.10 on behalf of the sponsors, said that Governing Council decision 89/63, which had called for the maintenance of the status quo with respect to the venue of the Council, had been superseded in importance by General Assembly resolution 45/264, paragraph 3 (h) of which stipulated that "restructuring and revitalization should be examined and pursued while ensuring the most efficient and effective use of the financial and human resources of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields".

2. The additional cost to the United Nations of holding Council meetings in Geneva rather than New York was $US 200,000. The limited resources of the Organization could be more constructively spent to promote technical cooperation for the benefit of the developing countries. Moreover, only 16 African States had missions in Geneva. While developing countries which were members of the Governing Council attended its meetings in Geneva, there was a tendency for developing countries which were not members not to attend. Accordingly, to ensure as broad participation as possible, particularly by the developing countries, the Council should meet in New York. Moreover, when Council meetings were held in Geneva, many headquarters staff from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development had to be sent there as well, and that was not an effective use of resources.

3. Mr. RADE (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community, said that the Twelve could not accept the draft decision for three main reasons. Firstly, experience had demonstrated that Governing Council sessions held in Geneva were better attended by delegations from the capitals of developing countries. Secondly, while cost certainly was a factor, the Twelve were not entirely convinced by the figures given by UNDP for meetings held away from headquarters, for it was their understanding that sessions in New York involved higher costs, for example, as far as translation services were concerned. Moreover, the cost to delegations was higher in New York than in Geneva. Thirdly, many of the agencies closely involved with the work of UNDP had their headquarters in Geneva and therefore could be more closely involved in the Council's work when its meetings were held there.

4. It was unlikely that a consensus could be reached on the issue at the current session. Further discussion of the matter should be deferred until the next session.

5. Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Observer for Bahrain) asked the secretariat whether the spirit of document DP/1991/L.10 was consistent with the policy of the United Nations to locate its economic organs in Geneva.

6. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that it was not for the secretariat to pass judgement on any draft decision submitted by sovereign Governments.

7. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that while he was pleased that the members of the European Economic Community were prepared to consider the question of the venue of the Council's meetings at some stage, he did not feel that it was necessary to wait until the next regular session.

8. Although he had not yet consulted the other sponsors of draft decision DP/1991/L.10, he proposed to revise the operative paragraph to read along the following lines:

> "Decides to review the issue of the venue of sessions of the Governing Council at the special session to be held in February 1992 and further decides to include in its provisional agenda an item entitled 'Arrangements for the Governing Council: Venue'."

9. Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Observer for Bahrain) said that while he had no objection to the revision just proposed, he wondered whether there would be time to discuss the issue at the special session in February.

10. The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Council was to hold an organizational meeting, not a special session, in February 1992. The Council could of course decide to hold a special session immediately before or after the organizational meeting.

11. Mr. RADE (Netherlands) suggested that informal consultations should be held to determine exactly when the issue would be discussed.

12. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) agreed with the procedure suggested by the representative of the Netherlands. Canada felt that it would be appropriate to discuss the question of venue at the organizational meeting in February.

13. The PRESIDENT pointed out that it would be necessary to amend the rules of procedure if it was ultimately decided to change the venue of the Council's meetings.

14. Mr. POPESCU (Romania) said that his delegation was not entirely convinced that the current arrangements for Council meetings should be altered. However, it would not object to further discussion of the issue, and endorsed the views of the representative of the Netherlands.

15. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) recalled that the Administrator had stated clearly at the current session that he would like the senior management structure to be discussed further at a special session in February. Accordingly, substantive discussion of issues would take place at that session.

16. The PRESIDENT observed that when the Administrator had made the point just referred to, the Council had not yet decided to hold a special session in February.

17. Mr. SAHA (India) said that, at the very least, the Council should decide to hold a special session after its organizational meeting in February 1992 in order to consider draft decision DP/1991/L.10.

18. Mr. GATHUNGU (Kenya) said some delegations seemed to believe that the draft decision should be discussed at the Governing Council's organizational meeting in February 1992 because it was an organizational issue. However, in his opinion, the draft decision was a substantive issue and should be discussed as such.

19. The PRESIDENT said that paragraph 2 of rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council stated that "the organizational meeting shall be responsible for the election of officers of the Governing Council, for the adoption of the agenda of the Governing Council's regular session and for any other matters that the Governing Council may determine". That meant that the issue could be included in the provisional agenda for the organizational meeting.

20. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the matter should be discussed in informal consultations, which should be held immediately.

21. Mr. RADE (Netherlands) requested the secretariat to provide information about the financial implications of holding a special session.

22. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that the secretariat would have to consult with the Department of Conference Services regarding the additional costs that a special session would entail. However, it would first have to determine how long the special session would be.

23. The PRESIDENT said that the discussion of the draft decision could be included as an item in the provisional agenda of the organizational meeting.

24. Mr. JASINSKI (Poland) said that the Governing Council would have to deal with many important and time-consuming issues in February 1992, and he questioned the advisability of including such a controversial issue in the Council's work. The Council should give priority to issues relating to the fifth programming cycle. Perhaps the question of the venue of the Council could be discussed during the middle of that cycle.

25. The PRESIDENT said that many delegations considered the issue raised in the draft decision to be a matter of priority. The Governing Council should begin informal consultations in order to decide whether it could defer the issue to its organizational meeting in February 1992.

26. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said he had understood that the question would be included as an item in the provisional agenda of the Governing Council's organizational meeting, on the assumption that a special session would be held. He drew attention to Council decision 89/66, which provided for an organizational meeting lasting one day and a special session lasting three days. While he believed that the Council should deal with the issue in a

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

special session, he would not object if the Council decided to consider the issue at its organizational meeting.

27. Mr. RADE (Netherlands) inquired whether the secretariat had already decided that there would be a special session following the organizational meeting in February 1992.

28. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that Governing Council decision 89/66 referred specifically to the special session that had been held from 21 to 23 February 1990. The Council had not yet decided when the 1992 organizational meeting would take place or whether to convene a special session following that meeting.

29. Mr. SAHA (India) said that, when the Governing Council took a decision on its work in 1992, it would also have to agree on a venue for its regular session. The approach that the Council had embarked on was somewhat confrontational and could lead to a deadlock. Procedural problems should not stand in the way of a discussion that could result in an agreement.

30. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) referred the representative of India to paragraph 1 of rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, which stated that "regular sessions shall be held alternately at United Nations Headquarters and at the Geneva office of the United Nations". If the Council decided to hold its regular sessions only in New York, it would have to change its rules of procedure.

31. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed to have informal consultations on when to consider draft decision DP/1991/L.10.

32. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.